

## Message Text

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TAGS: OEXC, GT (BAEZA, FELIX CORTEZ)

SUBJECT: IVG PROGRAM (BAEZA, FELIX CORTEZ)

REF: A. GUATEMALA 4962 B. STATE 210287

SUMMARY: REF B REQUESTS, AND THIS CABLE ATTEMPTS TO  
PROVIDE, JUSTIFICATION FOR THE COUNTRY TEAM'S NOMINATION  
OF LT. COL. FELIX BAEZA FOR A STATE DEPARTMENT  
LEADER GRANT.

1. THE ESCUELA POLITECNICA, THE WEST POINT OF  
GUATEMALA, WHERE LT.COL. BAEZA IS PRESENTLY SERVING  
AS DIRECTOR OF ACADEMIC STUDIES, PLAYS A CRUCIAL  
PART IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF GUATEMALAN POLITICAL AND  
MILITARY LEADERSHIP. SIX OF THE LAST SEVEN PRESIDENTS  
(ARBENZ, CASTILLO, YDIGORAS, PERALTA, ARANA, AND  
LAUGERUD) HAVE BEEN GRADUATES OF THE POLITECNICA.  
ALL THREE OF THE 1974 PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES WERE  
ALUMI OF THE SCHOOL. THE PRESENT MINISTER OF  
GOVERNMENT, GEN. VASSAUX, PREVIOUSLY SERVED AS CHIEF OF  
ACADEMIC INSTRUCTION AT THE SCHOOL.

2. CADETS ENTER THE MILITARY ACADEMY WHEN THEY ARE  
QUITE YOUNG - MOST ARE ABOUT SIXTEEN. DURING THEIR  
FOUR-YEAR STAY AT THE SCHOOL, THE STUDENTS ARE INTEGRATED  
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INTO THE ARMED FORCES, AND MUCH OF THEIR THINKING ABOUT

THE ROLE OF THE ARMY IN GUATEMALAN POLITICS IS SHAPED. IN ADDITION TO MILITARY DRILLS AND PRACTICES, INSTRUCTION INCLUDES COURSES IN THE SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES THROUGH THE JUNIOR COLLEGE LEVEL. THE CONTENT AND NATURE OF THIS INSTRUCTION IS UNDER BAEZA'S CONTROL. SCHOOL AUTHORITIES, INCLUDING BAEZA, SEEM EAGER TO INCORPORATE NEW IDEAS AND IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC INSTRUCTION.

3. CONSEQUENTLY, THE BAEZA NOMINATION IS IMPORTANT IN TWO ASPECTS. BECAUSE BAEZA MAY GO ON TO SERVE IN CIVILIAN ADMINISTRATIVE POSITIONS, EXPOSURE TO MODERN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION CONCEPTS SEEMS WORTHWHILE. BUT EVEN IF BAEZA WERE NEVER TO GO ON TO CIVILIAN RESPONSIBILITIES, HIS EXPOSURE TO U.S. ACADEMIC PROGRAMS, BOTH CIVILIAN AND MILITARY, WILL HAVE AN IMPORTANT EFFECT ON THE STUDENTS PRESENTLY AT THE MILITARY SCHOOL AND THOSE WHO WILL ATTEND THERE DURING THE REMAINDER OF HIS EXPECTED THREE-YEAR TENURE.

4. ADDITIONAL BIO INFORMATION: FOLLOWING HIS GRADUATION FROM THE MILITARY ACADEMY, BAEZA HAS SERVED IN A VARIETY OF POSITIONS, SUCH AS AIDE ON THE PRESIDENTIAL STAFF (1962-63), STAFF OFFICER ON THE PRESIDENTIAL GUARD (1967-70), AND STAFF OFFICER AT ARMY GENERAL HQ IN GUATEMALA CITY (1970,1971, 1972-73). HE ACHIEVED THE RANK OF LIEUTENANT COLONEL ON SEPTEMBER 15, 1970, ONLY 12 YEARS AFTER BEING COMMISSIONED AS A SECOND LIEUTENANT. IT IS THE VIEW OF U.S. MILITARY OFFICERS AT THIS POST THAT BAEZA IS A "COMER" WITH A PROMISING CAREER AHEAD OF HIM.

5. LT.COL. BAEZA IS MARRIED TO MARIA ELENA CASTILLO GOMAR DE BAEZA, WHO WAS BORN ON MAY 8, 1942. SHE IS REPORTEDLY A BILINGUAL SECRETARY. THEY HAVE TWO CHILDREN, BOTH GIRLS. THEY ARE BOTH PRACTICING ROMAN CATHOLICS.

ANDREWS

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